

Birtchnell, Thomas and Javier Caletrío (eds.). 2014. *Elite Mobilities (Changing Mobilities Series)*. London, New York: Routledge. 270 pp. Hb.: £80.00. ISBN: 9780415655804.

Published by Routledge, the *Changing Mobilities* series has in recent years brought forward some fascinating and ground-breaking titles. One of the first, published in 2014 is *Elite Mobilities*, edited by Thomas Birtchnell and Javier Caletrío. Elite, 'the few', 'the 1 per cent' are less (or not at all) interesting subjects of research for critical social science today, and at the same time too challenging to be studied, too hidden and even secretive to be caught in the methodological and epistemological frames. Authors contributing to *Elite Mobilities* try to challenge those notions by investigating precisely the 'shadowy' mobilities of people, finances, and resources.

In the *Introduction: The movement of the few*, co-editors list the main arguments for researching elite mobilities. Quoting Cato's "Nobiliorem, mobiliorem" or "the nobility were the mobility" Birtchnell and Caletrío introduce the collection of articles that are well up to date, rich in literature and bursting in references, swamped with diverse ethnographic material and theoretical concepts alike. With the "mobilities turn", they argue, the research on the "few", i.e. the super-rich, the privileged, the nobility, the wealthy, the global super-class, etc., was made possible, as mobilities tie all those classifications together. They identify 'mobilities as a useful optic [...]' for studying elites '[...] in its utter centrality (a veritably global consensus) to how power is exercised and expressed in the world' (p. 2). Two central theses of the volume are therefore: mobile elites 'are also part of the ordinary, everyday world' (p. 16), and regardless of their status elites 'must move to and fro between their places of abode, foci of activity and the rest of the world' (p. 9).

Studying mobilities in the fashion described by the contributors to this volume enables critical assessment of what being an elite represents in relation to the rest of the world (the poor, the second class, the pedestrian, the refugee, etc.). According to Birtchnell and Caletrío elite mobilities 'are a useful prism of analysis for an otherwise secretive and inaccessible minority' (p. 10). Further on, Birtchnell and Caletrío address the question of methodology in elite mobilities research and systematically and in-depth explain five central notions of the elite mobilities concept. The five notions (mobility-as-usual, stratification, super-inclusion, secrecies and residues) not only evoke academic interest: they are the key connecting elements between different chapters included in the book.

The collection of 14 chapters includes: an ethnographic study on the mobile lives of "new global elites", together with elite life-strategies, identity formations, practices and experiences conducted by Anthony Elliot; the conceptual framing of the super-rich mobilities provided by Jonathan V. Beaverstock and James Faulconbridge; Thomas Birtchnell, Gil Viry and John Urry discuss how the elites are formed in somehow unusual connection to new technologies, i.e. additive manufacturing or more commonly named, 3D printing; aerial mobilities, aeromobile elites or users of private business aviation in the context of the global economy are the main concern of the fifth chapter, written by Lucy Budd; the next chapter brings forward a study on the lifestyles of the rich

and super-rich where Mike Featherstone discusses living spaces, consumption activities, charitable pursuits, investment patterns, etc.; the social and cultural movement of the elites, also named “the ease of the mobility”, is examined by Shamus Rahman Khan; Matilde Córdoba Azcárate, Ana García de Fuentes and Juan Córdoba Ordóñez use the case of the Hacienda Temozón Sur in Mexico to critically examine the cross connection of luxury tourism and (local) development; luxury tourism is also central to another chapter, in which Crispin Thurlow and Adam Jaworski focus on social semiotics and the binary opposition of visible-invisible labour in luxury hotels and resorts globally; Javier Calterío shows how the travel aspirations of young European nationals are shaped by conspicuous consumption of the elite; social movement of the elite is in focus again by another author, Malene Freundendal-Pedersen, who examines the mobilities of the super-rich in connection to the Danish welfare system; finally, John Urry concludes the selection of “case studies” with the chapter on notorious offshore worlds, secret, but at the same time well-known tax havens and the role of super-rich in them. The last two chapters, *Epilogue* and a *Postscript*, are again reflective records of the elite mobilities concept. While Mimi Sheller in the *Epilogue* provides another summary of the topics included in the book, Andrew Sayer’s *Postscript* is an outsider’s critique of the elite mobilities concept and proposed approaches to studying it. It is an appeal to the academic community not only to pay more attention to the elites, the super-rich, and their movements but also to take more responsible and critical stances towards the source of their wealth, and especially the economic discourse, that is ‘central to symbolic domination’ (p. 253) of the elite. Analysing only four, often-used and what seems unambiguous descriptions in the neoliberal economic discourse, he provides most noteworthy argumentation for his appeal.

Despite rather weakly defined geographical contexts of the studies included in *Elite Mobilities*, their main ideas and conclusions, new knowledge and informative case studies will surely be interesting and inspiring for researchers and students of sociology, anthropology, migration and mobilities studies, economy and environment studies, as well as many other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities.

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